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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, August 22, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Meat Dishes for Low-Cost Meals." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Monday has rolled around again. Another day to think about the family pocket-book and little ways to save.

Let's see. We haven't had a good chat about meat for a long time, have we? Nothing seems quite to take the place of meat in most American households. So when funds and food supplies are low, many people, especially the men in the family, find doing without their usual amount of meat hard going. But clever housewives can contrive economy diets that will include more meat, if they know how to use the cheaper and less tender cuts.

The other day I listened in on a conversation between two specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics, -- Miss Ruth Van Deman and Miss Lucy Alexander, the meat cooking specialist. They were talking about meats for the summer menu. If I can remember it, I'd like to pass that conversation on to you, for it was full of ideas helpful to any cook or menu maker.

Miss Alexander began by telling what she thought were important points in choosing meat dishes for hot weather.

She said, "First of all, I'd choose meat dishes that have the maximum of flavor for the minimum of effort in the kitchen. This summer especially, most of us are looking for bargains in meat, as well as in everything else we have to buy. But with all the cured meats as well as all the fresh cuts to choose from, you can really get plenty of variety at low cost."

Miss Van Deman mentioned that even despite the recent upturn in the price of prok products, ham and bacon and all pork cuts, both fresh and cured, are still good bargains, still way below former price level. And forequarter cuts of beef and lamb are retailing lower than in ten years.

At the mention of ham, Miss Alexander said that she considered ham one of the very best summer meats. For a family of 4 or 5 a whole ham is a very economical buy.

"If you want to boil the whole ham and slice it cold, that's all right," said Miss Alexander. "But I prefer to serve it in different ways--some hot and some cold. When I buy a whole ham in the summer I ask the butcher to cut out three or four very thin slices from the center. These slices--about a quarter of an inch or so thick--I cut in strips, fry and serve with vegetables for dinner. Or, if we're going on a picnic in the car, I just put this fried ham in a covered dish where it will keep warm, and take it along. A strip of this warm ham with a leaf of crisp lettuce in a buttered roll makes one of the testiest picnic sandwiches I know.

Also, I have the butcher cut out a thick slice of ham for baking with tomatoes or sweet potatoes in the casserole. Then, the rest of the ham, I boil, and slice cold all that I can. The ends, I grind for sandwiches, salads, stuffed peppers and other combinations. A platter full of scrambled or poached eggs takes on a different look and a different taste with a generous sprinkling of ground cooked ham over the top."

"While you're talking about left-over cooked ham, don't forget that new french toasted sandwich you made the other day," suggested Miss Van Deman.

Here's how to make that French sandwich. You mix ground cooked ham with enough ham fat or butter to make it easy to spread. Just spread that filling directly on the bread. You don't have to spread any butter on first. Then you dip the sandwiches quickly into a mixture of two eggs beaten up in a cup of milk. And brown the sandwiches slowly in fat in a skillet, just as you do French toast. Served hot with some amber-colored watermelon pickle, these sandwiches were a big success.

Bacon is another inexpensive meat that these two specialists recommended for summer menus. For example, you can use a few slices of crisp, delicately browned bacon on a serving of quick-cooked cabbage, summer squash or Swiss chard. And save the bacon dripping. Keep them cold and fresh to use for frying and seasoning other foods.

Here's what Miss Alexder had to say about beef for summer meals.

"We prepared some pressed corn beef the other day that was very appetizing. We use corned beef costing 10 cents a pound in the retail market. First, we simmered it for about four hours. When the meat was tender, we stripped out the gristle and part of the fat and placed the pieces of meat lengthwise in a deep baking pan. We poured on just a little of the meat liquor, and then put another pan on top and weighted it down. We left the meat overnight in the coldest part of the refrigerator. When we turned it out the next day, it sliced down perfectly with a sharp knife."

Ground beef, made from the less tender and less expensive cuts, is another economical kind of meat, worth considering for summer menus. Beef that has been put through the meat grinder makes beef loaf to serve hot and cold, ground meat broiled on toast, and meat stuffing for green peppers and other vegetables.

As for lamb, curry of lamb made with the lowest priced cut makes an excellent summer dish. You serve it on a platter with a border of flaky boiled rice.

Shall I tell you how Miss Alexander makes curry of lamb? She grinds up the cooked lamb. Then she browns two sliced onions in a little fat, and adds a quart of partly ripe sliced tomatoes. She lets this mixture cook slowly until the tomatoes and onion slices are tender. Then she stirs in the cooked lamb and a little gravy and adds curry powder and salt to taste. That was all there is to it. Sometimes you can use green apples instead of the tomatoes.

This is a fine way to use up left-overs of lamb or veal or fresh pork," says Miss Alexander. "And of course you know that curry powder is a very appetizing flavor in hot weather. That's one reason why curried dishes of many kinds are so popular in Oriental countries."

When you are planning low-cost meals, of course you'll want to make the meat flavor stretch as far as possible--the old idea, you know, of making a little go a long way. For example, you can cream ham or chicken or dried frizzled beef and you can serve these creamed meats in a rice ring or a noodle ring. If you serve a roast on Sunday, you can stretch it out for several meals. Serve it hot on Sunday, cold sliced on Monday, and finally, the last of the roast might be scalloped, made into a stew or into chop suey. A very small amount of cooked meat is often good combined with vegetables. For example, shredded beans and pork or stuffed peppers.

Other inexpensive meat dishes are stuffed flank or round steak and shoulder roasts with stuffing.

The secret of cooking any of these inexpensive less tender cuts is long, gentle cooking in moisture. Yes, the way to make them tender is by slow cooking with moist heat, or by grinding or pounding them before they're cooked.

But I mustn't go on any more when the menu is waiting. Our inexpensive dinner menu today features stuffed peppers as the main dish. Suit yourself about what kind of ground meat you use for the stuffing. Stuffed peppers; Fried tomatoes; Creamed potatoes; Crusty Dutch apple cake and Iced coffee to drink.

Would you like a good recipe for stuffed peppers? All right. Here it is:

6 green peppers
2 cups of flaky cooked rice or bread crumbs
2 tablespoons of butter or other fat
2 cups of ground cooked meat
1 small onion, chopped fine
1/2 teaspoon of salt, or to taste
1/4 to 1/2 cup of chili sauce, catsup or meat gravy, and
1 cup of buttered bread crums.

Once more. Those eight ingredients. (Repeat.)

Cut off the stem ends of the peppers, remove the seeds and boil the pepper shells.for five minutes in lightly salted water. Drain them and stuff with a mixture made from the other ingredients. Cover with the buttered crumbs and bake in a moderate over for about 30 minutes--or until the peppers are tender and the crumbs brown. That's all.

Tomorrow: "Shopping for Summer Fruits."